

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1952.

All Items - "C" Series.

"C" Series index numbers of retail prices of all items (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1952.

City.	Index Number.	Increase from Year Ended June, 1939.	Increase from June Quarter, 1951.	Increase from March Quarter, 1952.
		%	%	%
Brisbane ..	2,064	139.2	21.6	2.9
Toowoomba ..	2,093	145.9	22.8	3.5
Rockhampton ..	2,090	142.7	20.2	2.8
Townsville ..	2,142	134.9	22.3	2.9
Bundaberg ..	2,052	144.0	20.3	2.2
Warwick ..	2,061	150.7	21.5	3.4

The June quarter of 1952 was the second successive quarter in which retail prices in Brisbane showed a smaller increase than in the preceding quarter. The increase in the quarter was 2.9 per cent., which followed a rise of 3.7 per cent. in the March quarter of 1952, and 7.7 per cent. in the December quarter of 1951. The latter was the greatest increase ever recorded in one quarter, while the latest rise was the smallest for nearly two years, the last quarter in which a smaller rise occurred being September quarter of 1950 with 2.5 per cent.

Proportionately, the greatest increase during the quarter was in the "miscellaneous items" section of the index, with a rise of 7.5 per cent., followed by "clothing and footwear" with 2.7 per cent., and "food and groceries" with 1.9 per cent. Owing to the different weights accorded to each section in the combined index, these three sections contributed in fairly equal parts to the total increase, "miscellaneous items" being slightly more important than the others.

The increase in food and grocery prices was the smallest since the June quarter of 1950. Clothing and footwear prices, which usually show a fairly heavy rise in the June quarter of the year owing to the pricing of new stocks of seasonal winter goods, rose a little more than in the March quarter of 1952, but the increase was the smallest for any June quarter since 1947. Miscellaneous items, which tend to rise irregularly, as charges for power, fuel, transport, &c. are adjusted, recorded their largest increase since the March quarter of 1951.

Price increases in the June quarter of 1952 in the provincial cities for which index numbers are available were fairly similar to that for Brisbane. Bundaberg showed a lower increase of 2.2 per cent., compared with Brisbane's 2.9 per cent., both food and grocery prices and clothing and footwear prices having risen less in that city. Toowoomba and Warwick showed higher increases of 3.5 and 3.4 per cent. respectively, food in both cities and clothing in Warwick contributing to the greater rise.

Percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39 in food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and miscellaneous items are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1952.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1952.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1952.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1952.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	172.7	1.9	262.1	2.7	95.2	7.5
Toowoomba ..	199.0	4.4	257.7	2.4	90.1	5.5
Rockhampton ..	169.9	1.8	258.2	2.2	98.2	7.6
Townsville ..	158.8	1.8	260.6	3.1	99.8	6.3
Bundaberg ..	166.1	1.1	260.8	2.1	90.9	6.4
Warwick ..	181.9	3.2	265.3	3.5	90.6	5.5

Food and Groceries.

During the June quarter, increases recorded in the food and groceries index numbers ranged from 1.1 per cent. in Bundaberg to 4.4 per cent. in Toowoomba. The principal increases were in the prices of sugar, milk, bread, jam, and eggs, and, in Toowoomba and Warwick, meat.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary in Bundaberg and Warwick but increases were recorded in the other towns for which data are collected, the largest being in Townsville where a rise of 1.7 per cent. occurred.

Clothing and Footwear.

The clothing and footwear index for Brisbane increased by 2.7 per cent. during the quarter. Although this was higher than the increase recorded during the March quarter, it was only one-third of the increase that occurred during the corresponding quarter of 1951. The increase was due chiefly to higher prices for winter goods, such as overcoats, cardigans, and pullovers, and to dearer footwear.

Miscellaneous Items.

The increase of 7.5 per cent. in the miscellaneous items index for Brisbane has been exceeded on only one other occasion (8.3 per cent. in March quarter of 1951). This increase was caused by higher charges for gas and electricity and increased costs of items in the "other miscellaneous" section, which includes items such as lodge dues, medicine, smoking, and recreation, and which vary intermittently at long intervals.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in June quarter, 1952, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	19	10	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	19	9		1	0	1 $\frac{3}{4}$
Rockhampton ..	1	0	3	1	0	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	18	2	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	2	1	0	8
Townsville ..	1	0	9	1	1	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	19	9	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	1	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Bundaberg ..		19	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	7	15	7	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	2	1	0	4 $\frac{3}{4}$
Warwick ..		19	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	16	10	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	1	1	0	7

In relation to Brisbane prices, the cost of all items together increased during the quarter in Toowoomba and Warwick, decreased in Rockhampton and Bundaberg, and remained unchanged in Townsville which is the dearest city for which data are collected. Bundaberg replaced Warwick as the cheapest city included in the survey.

Variations in the cost of purchasing food and groceries costing £1 in Brisbane ranged from a decrease of 2d. in Bundaberg to an increase of 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in Toowoomba.

Only small variations were recorded in the relative prices of clothing and footwear, the largest being in Warwick where these items costing £1 in Brisbane would have cost £1 0s. 1d., compared with 19s. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. during March quarter.

Prices of miscellaneous items in relation to Brisbane were practically unchanged in Rockhampton but decreased in the other four cities covered by the survey. These variations were due chiefly to the fact that both electricity and gas prices

increased in Brisbane and Rockhampton, while one only or neither of these items increased in each of the other four cities.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

Following the publication of the index numbers for the June quarter, 1952, the basic wage rates of the Commonwealth Court were automatically adjusted from 1st August, 1952. The index numbers, the new wage rates, and the amounts of the adjustments are shown in the next table. The latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated, are also shown. Commonwealth rates operated from the beginning of the first full pay period in August.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.

Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 2nd Quarter, 1952.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.		State Basic Wage.						
		Males. ^a	Increase on Previous Rate.	Males.	Females.	Date of Operation.				
		£	s.	d.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Brisbane	2,064	10	13	0	6	0	10	13	0	7 2 6 28.7.52
Sydney	2,284	11	15	0	12	0	11	15	0	8 16 0 1.8.52
Melbourne	2,177	11	4	0	12	0	(11 4 0)	a		1.8.52 ^b
Adelaide	2,170	11	4	0	13	0	11	4	0	8 8 0 1.8.52
Perth	2,158	11	2	0	8	0	11	12	3	7 11 0 28.7.52
Hobart	2,159	11	2	0	8	0	(11 2 0)	a		1.8.52 ^b

^a The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

^b No State wage declared. The rate shown is that of the Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

5th August, 1952.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended June, 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.
Brisbane	863	1,079	1,950	1,698	1,796	1,934	2,006	2,064
Toowoomba	851	1,092	1,970	1,705	1,821	1,944	2,022	2,093
Rockhampton ..	861	1,084	1,973	1,739	1,819	1,950	2,033	2,090
Townsville	912	1,119	2,023	1,752	1,861	2,006	2,082	2,142
Bundaberg	841	1,059	1,941	1,706	1,792	1,911	2,008	2,052
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	1,082	1,958	1,706	1,804	1,940	2,014	2,072
Warwick	822	1,073	1,943	1,696	1,800	1,918	1,994	2,061

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended June, 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.
Brisbane	856	971	2,154	1,690	1,847	2,145	2,290	2,334
Toowoomba	814	1,010	2,210	1,722	1,904	2,169	2,332	2,434
Rockhampton ..	895	1,012	2,229	1,801	1,931	2,194	2,373	2,416
Townsville	955	1,057	2,295	1,787	1,996	2,281	2,429	2,472
Bundaberg	903	1,027	2,208	1,773	1,909	2,142	2,377	2,403
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	984	2,174	1,709	1,869	2,159	2,311	2,357
Warwick	846	1,000	2,201	1,772	1,943	2,165	2,311	2,385

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended June, 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.
Brisbane	829	1,454	2,894	2,673	2,787	2,864	2,923	3,002
Toowoomba	829	1,429	2,863	2,623	2,773	2,819	2,896	2,965
Rockhampton ..	845	1,477	2,919	2,696	2,788	2,898	2,961	3,027
Townsville	840	1,457	2,910	2,704	2,794	2,878	2,938	3,029
Bundaberg	839	1,447	2,939	2,735	2,839	2,925	2,965	3,027
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	831	1,454	2,896	2,675	2,788	2,866	2,926	3,004
Warwick	825	1,441	2,884	2,640	2,751	2,858	2,913	3,014